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# General Assembly
Fifty-eighth session

*Official Records*

First Committee
1st meeting
Monday, 29 September 2003, 10.20 a.m.
New York

*Chairman:* Mr. Jarmo Sareva ..... (Finland)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.*

**Expression of sympathy for the victims of the attack on United Nations headquarters in Baghdad on 19 August 2003**

**The Chairman**: Before proceeding to the consideration of the first item on the agenda for this meeting, I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to express, on behalf of the entire membership of the First Committee and on my own behalf, our condolences to the families of those who lost their lives as a result of the recent attacks on the United Nations. Let us pay tribute to those who lost their lives or were injured in the bombing of the headquarters of the United Nations in Baghdad on 19 August 2003. I invite representatives to kindly stand to observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

*The Committee observed one minute of silent prayer or meditation*

**Statement by the Chairman**

**The Chairman**: Let me begin our proceedings by extending a warm welcome to all Member States participating in the deliberations of the First Committee at the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. I am confident that we will make every effort to discharge our common responsibilities in a productive manner.

It is an honour and a privilege for my country and for me that the General Assembly has elected me Chairman of the First Committee. My appreciation extends to all delegations for the confidence that they have placed in me. With the Committee's support, I hope I will be able to help it accomplish its challenging tasks in a manner worthy of its trust. I wish to recall the very kind gesture extended to me by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Colombia, Ambassador José Nicolás Rivas, Vice-Chairman of the First Committee during the fifty-seventh session, when he nominated me for the post of Chairman of the First Committee.

As I undertake my responsibilities as Chairman of this important body, I will depend upon the cooperation and assistance of its entire membership. I will also depend upon the valuable experience, knowledge and competence of Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs; Mr. Chen Jian, Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management; and Mr. Mohammad Sattar, Secretary of the First Committee, and his colleagues in the Secretariat, who will contribute greatly to the success of our work. I am sure that the First Committee will benefit from their experience and that it will look forward to their support in dealing with the many important issues before us.

**Election of officers**

**The Chairman**: The agenda for this morning's meeting concerns the election of the officers of the First Committee, namely, the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur, as well as the organization of work of the

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Committee during the fifty-eighth session. Unless I hear an objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to adopt the agenda. I hear no objection. We shall therefore proceed accordingly.

Before taking up the first item on the agenda, namely, the election of the officers of the First Committee, I would like to draw the attention of members to the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 1935th meeting, on 22 September 1971, concerning the procedure for the election of officers of the Main Committees. According to the terms of that decision, the nomination of candidates should be limited to one statement for each candidate, after which the Committee should immediately proceed to the election. The Committee will therefore follow that procedure today.

I shall now give the floor to the representative of Colombia, Ambassador José Nicolás Rivas.

**Mr. Rivas** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption today of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I would like to reaffirm to you the support and cooperation of the delegation of Colombia in the fulfilment of your responsibilities.

It is an honour for me to nominate Mr. Ionut Suseanu, First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Romania to the United Nations in New York, as one of the Vice-Chairmen of the First Committee's Bureau representing the Group of Eastern European States. Mr. Suseanu holds a master's degree and a doctorate in international law from the Romanian Academy of Sciences. He worked for several years in the field of disarmament in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of his country, as well as in Romania's mission in Vienna. Because of all of his professional and personal qualifications, I believe that Mr. Suseanu will occupy that post with competence and great commitment to the agenda we are charged with promoting during this session.

**The Chairman**: I thank the representative of Colombia for his nomination of Mr. Ionut Suseanu of Romania to the post of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee.

I wish to express to Ambassador José Nicolás Rivas of Colombia the Committee's appreciation for his valuable contribution to the work of the First Committee as Vice-Chairman during the fifty-seventh session.

As there are no other nominations, may I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and the established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with a secret ballot and declare Mr. Ionut Suseanu elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation?

*It was so decided.*

**The Chairman**: I shall now give the floor to the representative of Qatar, Mr. Jamal Nasser Al-Bader.

**Mr. Al-Bader** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, the delegation of Qatar would like warmly to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to preside over the First Committee during the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly and to wish you every success. We are confident that, with your skill and the cooperation of the members of the Bureau, we will achieve the objectives set for this session.

It is my honour to nominate Mr. Anouar Ben Youssef, First Secretary in the Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the United Nations. It has been my honour to work with him for many years here at the United Nations and in this body. I am well acquainted with his experience and skill in the fields of the disarmament and the maintenance of international peace and security, which are among the main areas of concern of the United Nations.

Mr. Ben Youssef was in charge of disarmament affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia from 1994 to 1999. From 1999 to the present, he has worked at his country's Permanent Mission to the United Nations and in the First Committee. During Tunisia's membership of the Security Council, in 2000 and 2001, Mr. Ben Youssef was responsible for the East Timor, Afghanistan, Georgia and Tajikistan portfolios. During 2003 he has been Vice-Chairman of an open-ended working group discussing the goals and the agenda with the possibility of establishing in New York a preparatory committee on disarmament. He was part of Tunisia's delegation from the fifty-third to the fifty-seventh sessions of the General Assembly. He also took part in the Second Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention at The Hague in December 1997 and was a member of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review

Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

We support Mr. Ben Youssef's candidacy as Vice-Chairman. We are certain that he is indeed the best candidate here for assuming that high responsibility.

My delegation would like to reiterate that we will extend our support and cooperation to the Chairman in every possible way in order to achieve the objectives of the First Committee.

**The Chairman**: I thank the representative of Qatar for his nomination of Mr. Anouar Ben Youssef of Tunisia to the post of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee.

I wish to express to Mr. Al-Bader of Qatar the Committee's appreciation for the distinction with which he carried out his duties and for his valuable contribution to the work of the First Committee as Vice-Chairman.

As there are no other nominations, may I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and the established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with a secret ballot and declare Mr. Anouar Ben Youssef elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation?

*It was so decided.*

**The Chairman**: I shall now give the floor to the representative of Romania, Mr. Ionut Suseanu.

**Mr. Suseanu** (Romania): Allow me to congratulate you most sincerely, Mr. Chairman, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I am confident that you will guide us through the Committee's work in an excellent manner. I also wish to assure you of our whole-hearted support in the discharge of your important responsibilities.

Allow me to introduce the candidacy of Mr. Suriya Chindawongse of Thailand for the position of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee during this session. Mr. Chindawongse is a graduate of Lafayette College in Pennsylvania in the areas of international affairs, economics and business. He holds a Master of Arts in law and diplomacy from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy of Tufts University, in Massachusetts. In 1993, Mr. Chindawongse was awarded a doctorate by the Fletcher School. He has served in several departments since he began his career at Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including in the department for East Asian Affairs. He also served in the offices of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the permanent secretary. He has served in New York as First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Thailand to the United Nations since 2001, dealing in particular with the First Committee.

Mr. Chindawongse has demonstrated excellent skills in his work with the Committee. He is a good colleague whom we believe deserves to occupy the post of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee during this session.

**The Chairman**: I thank the representative of Romania for his nomination of Mr. Suriya Chindawongse of Thailand to the post of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee.

Through Mr. Ionut Suseanu of Romania, I wish to convey to Mr. Razvan Victor Rusu the Committee's sincere appreciation for his valuable contribution to the work of the First Committee in his capacity as Vice-Chairman during the fifty-seventh session.

As there are no other nominations, may I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and the established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with a secret ballot and declare Mr. Suriya Chindawongse elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation?

*It was so decided.*

**The Chairman**: I would like to express my sincere and warm congratulations to Mr. Anouar Ben Youssef, Mr. Suriya Chindawongse and Mr. Ionut Suseanu for their election as Vice-Chairmen of the First Committee. I am certain that with their experience and knowledge in the field of disarmament, they will make a valuable contribution to the work of the Committee.

**Election of the Rapporteur**

**The Chairman**: I now give the floor to Mr. Mehmet Samsar, Rapporteur of the First Committee at the fifty-seventh session.

**Mr. Samsar** (Turkey): Allow me, first of all, to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election as the Chairman of the First Committee.

Today, I would like to nominate Mr. Miguel Carbo, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Ecuador, to the post of Rapporteur. Mr. Carbo is a

graduate of the University of Northern Illinois, where he studied in the department of political science. He holds two master's degrees, in security and development and international political and economic affairs. He also holds a doctorate degree in international relations. In addition to his eminent postings in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he has also served as a diplomat in Chicago, Bucharest, Bogotá and Rome and at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. I am sure that his personal and professional qualifications make him the right person to deal with the challenging agenda before us.

**The Chairman**: I thank the representative of Turkey for his nomination of Ambassador Miguel Carbo of Ecuador for the post of Rapporteur of the First Committee. I would also like to thank Mr. Samsar for his important contribution to the Committee's work as Rapporteur during the fifty-seventh session.

Members of the Committee have just heard the representative of Turkey nominate Ambassador Miguel Carbo for the post of Rapporteur. As there are no other nominations, may I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and the established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with a secret ballot and declare Ambassador Miguel Carbo elected as Rapporteur of the First Committee by acclamation?

*It was so decided.*

**The Chairman**: I sincerely congratulate Ambassador Miguel Carbo on his election as Rapporteur of the First Committee. I now invite him to take the place reserved for him at the podium.

At this juncture, I would like to draw the attention of the members of the Committee to rule 110 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which reads as follows:

> "Congratulations to the officers of a Main Committee shall not be expressed except by the Chairman of the previous session — or, in his absence, by a member of his delegation — after all the officers of the Committee have been elected."

I now call on Ambassador Francis Butagira, the representative of Uganda, who will speak on behalf of Ambassador Matia Mulumba Semakula Kiwanuka, Chairman of the First Committee during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

**Mr. Butagira** (Uganda): Allow me to join those who have spoken before me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee during the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. My delegation is confident that under your leadership the Committee will successfully execute its mandate. I wish to assure you and the Bureau of the full cooperation of my delegation at all times.

Uganda held the chairmanship of the First Committee during the last session of the General Assembly. We would like to express our appreciation and gratitude for the support and confidence that the Committee placed in us, which enabled us to successfully accomplish our responsibilities. We would also like to thank Mr. Sattar, the Secretary of the Committee, as well as the members of the Secretariat and Bureau, whose cooperation and support were invaluable in the execution of our mandate. We wish you, Mr. Chairman, and the Bureau a successful tenure.

**The Chairman**: I thank the representative of Uganda for his kind words addressed to me and the other officers of the Committee. I request him to kindly convey, on behalf of the Committee and on my own behalf, our congratulations and gratitude to Ambassador Matia Mulumba Semakula Kiwanuka for the outstanding and skilful manner in which he presided over the deliberations of the First Committee during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

I now give the floor to the representative of Tunisia, Mr. Anouar Ben Youssef.

**Mr. Ben Youssef** (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of my delegation and myself, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee. We assure you of my delegation's full support during our work at this session of the First Committee.

It is an honour for my country and for me to have been chosen by the African Group to represent it in the First Committee as Vice-Chairman. On this occasion, I would like to thank all the member States of the Committee for the confidence placed in me to hold this position. I also want to thank in advance Mr. Sattar and all members of the secretariat and assure them all of

my delegation's full support. I hope to be able to fulfil my task by providing the necessary support and by learning from all the other members during this session.

**The Chairman**: I wish to thank the representative of Tunisia, Mr. Anouar Ben Youssef, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, for his kind remarks addressed to me. I look forward to his active cooperation, and I am confident that I can count on his assistance.

I call on Mr. Suriya Chindawongse, representative of Thailand.

**Mr. Chindawongse** (Thailand): First of all, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election and assure you of my and my delegation's support for your work. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to say a few words, and when I say "a few words," I really mean it. After all, if our respective heads of delegations were limited to five or even three minutes in some of the meetings here last week, who am I to have more time?

First I would like to thank the Asian Group for nominating me and the Committee for electing me by acclamation as Vice-Chairman. I accept the confidence that members have entrusted in me with a deep sense of awe and a deeper sense of humility: awe because the challenges facing our Committee, tasked with dealing with the important questions of disarmament and international security, are increasing, and humility because there is full recognition that no Vice-Chairman, indeed no Bureau, could even think of trying to bring about a successful conclusion of the First Committee session without the full cooperation of all the stakeholders in this room and beyond.

All I can hope to offer, then, is my solemn pledge to serve the Committee with sincerity and perseverance and to the best of my ability, with the hope that come 7 November, when our work officially concludes, we can feel that some small contribution has been made to further advance the goals of disarmament and international security.

With these two minutes that I have allotted myself, I conclude my few words by thanking all members again for the honour they have kindly bestowed upon me and my country by electing me as their Vice-Chairman.

**The Chairman**: I thank the representative of Thailand, Mr. Suriya Chindawongse, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, for his kind words addressed to me, as well as to other members of the Bureau. I wish to reciprocate those sentiments, and I am confident that I can count on his very active assistance and cooperation.

I call on Mr. Ionut Suseanu, representative of Romania.

**Mr. Suseanu** (Romania): Once again, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee and assure you of my full cooperation and support during this session. At the same time, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the members of the Eastern European Group for supporting my candidature to this position and to the representatives here today for electing me Vice-Chairman of the First Committee. I would like to assure them all of my close cooperation and transparency during the work of this Committee and of my readiness to contribute to the successful outcome of the forthcoming debates of this Committee.

**The Chairman**: I thank Mr. Ionut Suseanu, representative of Romania, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, for his kind words addressed to me, and I wish to reciprocate those sentiments. I am confident that I can count on his very active assistance and cooperation.

I call on Mr. Miguel Carbo, representative of Ecuador, the newly elected Rapporteur of the Committee.

**Mr. Carbo** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your well-deserved election. It is an honour for me and my country to be chosen by my regional group and to be elected by members as Rapporteur of this Committee. I also wish to thank the representative of Turkey for putting forward my candidature. I look forward to cooperating with you, Mr. Chairman, and with the other members of the Bureau, in order to make progress in the work of this Committee.

**The Chairman**: I thank the Rapporteur of the First Committee for his generous remarks and for his expression of willingness to cooperate closely with me and the other officers of the Committee. I am certain that I express not only my own feelings but also those of the Vice-Chairmen and of the Committee's

secretariat when I say that it is our intention to work in close cooperation with him during the current session.

**Organization of work**

**The Chairman**: We shall now proceed to the next item on the agenda: the organization of the work of the Committee for the fifty-eighth session.

At the outset, I wish to draw members' attention to document A/C.1/58/1, containing the letter dated 19 September 2003 addressed to the Chairman of the First Committee by the President of the General Assembly and informing him that the General Assembly, at its 2nd plenary meeting, had decided to allocate 19 disarmament and related international security agenda items to the First Committee for its consideration.

Before I proceed to give a more detailed account of the programme of work and timetable that is being proposed, I would like to indicate that the proposed programme of work and timetable has been prepared in keeping with previous practice, as well as by taking into account a number of initiatives proposed over the past several years, including General Assembly decision 52/416 B, on the rationalization of the work of the First Committee. In that connection, I also took into account paragraph 36 of the annex to resolution 51/241, which reads as follows:

> "The First Committee and the Fourth Committee shall not meet simultaneously and may consider meeting in a sequential manner during the regular session of the General Assembly."

In accordance with established practice, the First Committee commences its substantive work, as reflected in the proposed programme of work and timetable contained in document A/C.1/58/CRP.1/Rev.1, on Monday, 6 October 2003. With regard to the closing date of the Committee's work, members will recall that, also under Assembly decision 52/416 B, it was agreed that the First Committee should make every effort to conduct and conclude its substantive work with the most efficient use of time and resources in no less than 30 meetings and in a time frame not exceeding five weeks. In view of the above, I shall make every effort — of course with the assistance and the cooperation of members — to conclude the work of the Committee, as recommended by the General Committee, on Friday, 7 November 2003, at the latest.

Therefore, the First Committee's substantive session will run from Monday 6 October to Friday 7 November, giving the Committee a maximum of 26 meetings to consider the agenda items allocated to it by the General Assembly. Here I would like to point out that last year the Committee had at its disposal a total of 30 meetings, of which it utilized 23. I therefore believe that if we make a concerted and sincere attempt to utilize our resources in an effective and efficient manner, we can indeed accomplish our tasks without any undue difficulties.

Following the consultations that I have conducted, and drawing upon the experience that has evolved over the years, I have arrived at the bold programme of work and timetable that is before the Committee, to which I now draw the attention of members. It will be observed that the consideration of the items allocated to the First Committee will, as it has for several years now, proceed in three phases. That is reflected in the proposed programme of work and timetable.

As I have already mentioned, the Committee will begin its substantive session on Monday 6 October and will hold a single general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items allocated to it. A total of 10 meetings — from Monday 6 October to Friday 17 October — will be devoted to that phase of the Committee's work. The list of speakers for that phase is open, and a number of delegations have already inscribed their names. I invite those delegations wishing to participate in the general debate to kindly inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible. Moreover, it should be noted that the list of speakers for the general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items will close on Monday 6 October at 6 p.m.

I would like to appeal to delegations to kindly limit the delivery of their statements, if at all possible, to 10 minutes for those speaking in their national capacity, and 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations, in order to enable all those delegations wishing to participate in the general debate to do so within the short time allocated for that purpose.

The next phase of the Committee's work will be the thematic discussion of item subjects, as well as the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under all disarmament and

related international security agenda items. This phase of the Committee's work will cover the period from Monday 20 October to Friday 24 October, and a total of 6 meetings will be allocated for that purpose. I hope delegations will make specific comments on the topics to be considered at that stage of the work of the Committee.

I wish to inform members of the Committee that, in order to have a structured discussion and to fully utilize conference facilities, after necessary consultations I will prepare an indicative timetable based on the established practice of the Committee for the second phase of its work. The indicative paper will be made available to members as soon as possible. In order to facilitate the Committee's work and grant sufficient time to delegations for consultations, as well as to give enough time to the Secretariat to process draft resolutions in all six officials languages, the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions will be on Wednesday 15 October at 6 p.m. I intend, with the Committee's cooperation, to maintain the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions, and I therefore appeal to the Committee to adhere strictly to that deadline.

Member States are encouraged to submit their draft resolutions and decisions as early as possible, in order to enable delegations to seek the necessary instructions from their capitals and to carry out consultations on them, so as to ensure that the texts finally adopted reflect the greatest possible degree of consensus. The early submission of draft resolutions will also give members of the Committee an opportunity to comment on them during the second phase of the work, which is actually intended for that purpose.

Furthermore, it is imperative that delegations submit those draft resolutions that could entail programme budget implications as early as possible to enable the Secretariat to prepare the necessary programme budget implications on time. That would also enable the Committee to take action upon them with a view to meeting the mandatory deadline required for their submission to the Fifth Committee. In that regard, I would like to inform delegations that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee need adequate time to review the programme budget implications of draft resolutions before the latter can be acted upon by the Assembly.

Last, but not least, the third phase of the Committee's work — action on all draft resolutions and decisions — will be from Monday 27 October to Friday 7 November. In accordance with the Committee's proposed programme of work and timetable, a total of 10 meetings have been designated for that stage of the work. Last year the Committee completed its action on all draft resolutions and decisions — of which there were 52 and 2, respectively — in only 7 meetings.

It is my intention to retain the voting procedure involving the grouping of draft resolutions by clusters during this session. I shall in due course present specific proposals concerning this matter.

I believe that, based on the proposed programme of work and timetable that is now before members, the Committee will be able to efficiently consider all the agenda items allocated to it within the available time and to successfully conclude its work by Friday 7 November at the latest. I should also like to remind delegations of the need to maintain the requisite degree of flexibility in the process of implementing the proposed programme of work and timetable — but of course, only to the extent that that will enhance the effectiveness of the organization of our work.

As members may recall, the proposed draft programme of work and timetable was considered and approved ad referendum at the informal meeting of the Committee on Thursday, 18 September 2003. May I therefore take it that the proposed draft programme of work and timetable meets the approval of the Committee?

I give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

**Mr. Najafi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau, on your elections.

I would like to make two points. The first is related to the annex to document A/C.1/58/1, which lists the items allocated to the First Committee. Item 12 on that list, which pertains to agenda item 73, includes a bracketed reference to a recommendation of the General Assembly regarding that item. I would like to seek clarification on that recommendation, namely, whether it sets a precedent to include a recommendation among the agenda items when it is not itself an item. That is my first point.

My second point relates to the content of that recommendation, as it was not discussed in detail in the General Committee. For the sake of common understanding, I would like to seek clarification from the Chairman — or perhaps, through him, from those delegations that proposed the recommendation — as to what is meant by "some portions" of the report referred to in item 12. I have the report before me, which is very long and contains 127 pages with different parts. For example, I can refer to the part that mentions the number of States that have not concluded safeguards agreements. There are a lot of examples. There are sub-items in the same item 12. As I said, I seek explanation in order to have common understanding.

**The Chairman**: I should like to recall that we are currently discussing the proposed programme of work and timetable of the Committee contained in document A/C.1/58/CRP.1/Rev.1, to the adoption of which I was proceeding. The issue raised by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran was effectively decided by the General Assembly at its 2nd plenary meeting, upon the recommendation of the General Committee. In that sense, the decision has indeed been made.

I would also recall that the question raised is one on which the plenary of the General Assembly was acting along the lines of established procedure. Recalling decisions by the fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh sessions of the Assembly, the item in question, or portions thereof, have been allocated to the First Committee in the past. In that regard, the Assembly was merely following established practice. But, as I said, what is at stake at this stage is the adoption of the Committee's proposed programme of work and timetable, and not the allocation of items to the Committee, which has effectively been decided by the General Assembly.

Does that explanation satisfy the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran?

**Mr. Najafi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for your explanation. I understand fully, and I can go along with proceeding. However, I would just like to raise our concern about the fact that these kinds of issues have always been adopted through consultations among the members of the First Committee. Our delegation, at least, is not aware of any such consultations. We simply want to make our concern known, and we will certainly go into detail about it during the First Committee's proceedings.

**Mr. Durrani** (Pakistan): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee.

I apologize for taking the floor, as I realize that the Chairman was dealing with the programme of work, but I would just like to ask the Chairman to clarify some points regarding the agenda item mentioned in item 12 in the annex in A/C.1/58/1. First, under which agenda item will the Assembly's decision regarding the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) be placed? Secondly, item 14 of the General Assembly's agenda deals with the IAEA report. What will then happen to agenda item 14 as such, which deals with this matter?

The annex in A/C.1/58/1 lists specific agenda items, including one in item 12 of the list that contains sub-items (a) through (z). There are also other agenda items. Item 12 refers to the IAEA report, document A/58/312. I am therefore a little bit confused about whether the report will come as an agenda item or whether it will be a sort of report that is read out for the First Committee — but under what precedent? Even if the General Committee has debated this, has it overlooked agenda item 14, pertaining to the IAEA report, as such?

**The Chairman**: Before taking action on the issue we are discussing, I would like to note that agenda item 14 of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly will be discussed in the plenary. As we proceed, portions of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency will be discussed under the relevant sub-items of agenda item 73, entitled "General and complete disarmament". That is fully in line with past practice and precedent.

**Mr. Durrani** (Pakistan): I thank you very much for your explanation, Mr. Chairman. But, again, the question is: what are the relevant items whereby the IAEA report would overshadow those items? This is a procedural question, as well as a substantive one. The IAEA statutes are very clear. How can they overshadow the agenda items, which are themselves stand-alone agenda items dealing with specific issues?

**The Chairman**: With regard to the procedure to be followed in this connection, as we proceed and as the various sub-items of agenda item 73, entitled

"General and complete disarmament", are considered by the Committee, the relevant portions of the IAEA report will be discussed. For example, under sub-item (w) — "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction" — the relevant portions of the IAEA report will be taken into account. But as to the question from the representative of Pakistan relating to which portions are in question, I cannot provide an answer at this point. Moreover, we are about to adopt the proposed timetable for our programme of work. We will have to provide an answer separately. The issue was effectively decided by the General Assembly at its 2nd plenary meeting. I hope that we can proceed to take action with regard to our programme of work and timetable.

**Mr. Durrani** (Pakistan): With regard to the explanation that the Chairman has given relating to sub-item (w) of agenda item 73, if we go through the pertinent resolution we will find that it does not deal with that issue at all. So we could suspend the bracketed portion contained in item 12 for further discussion in order that we may proceed. The point is, there should not be any ambiguity with regard to a particular statutory item, such as the IAEA and its report, spilling over into other items, given that it is itself comprehensive and is dealt with under its own agenda item — unless we decide, or the General Assembly decides, otherwise, as per the rules of procedure.

I would therefore request the secretariat to come up with clear rules of procedure to determine under which rule overlapping agenda items are to be dealt with, including the placement of spill-over agenda items that are otherwise relevant. This matter can be discussed in the general debate, but when we talk about particular resolutions or decisions, then particular rules of procedure should apply.

**Mr. Namakando** (Zambia): Our comments are very much in line with the comments made by the representative of Pakistan. We generally do not see much merit in setting this kind of precedent. We think that the best way to proceed would be to have a very clear discussion of the entire report as such, instead of just selective portions that most of us have not discussed previously.

**The Chairman**: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I would like to remind representatives that, in accordance with the agenda we agreed on today at the beginning of the meeting, we are discussing the Committee's proposed programme of work and timetable. The issue that has been raised, which is important and of concern to a number of delegations, was effectively decided by the General Assembly at its 2nd plenary meeting.

I shall now give the floor to the speakers on my list. I would ask them to be brief and to facilitate the eventual move to the adoption of our programme of work and timetable.

**Mr. Issa** (Egypt): Allow me to congratulate the members of the Bureau who were elected today.

I shall be brief, as I really do not wish to hinder the progress of work at all.

The issue we are discussing is really one of substance that will have an impact on the work of the First Committee, not only during this session but also during future sessions. Frankly, I have only today — when I received it in my office prior to coming here — had a chance to look at the document in question. Had that not been the case, this matter might have been dealt with earlier. But I think we are facing a precedent-setting issue. I also think that there is a possibility, which should not be completely discounted, that the General Committee might have overstepped its constitutional bounds by making the recommendation to the General Assembly. That is not a decisive statement; I simply raise the possibility. I think we should really look into the matter very carefully before adopting the bracketed statement in item 12 in the annex to document A/C.1/58/1.

In the view of my delegation, the issue is one of substance that will have very serious impact on the work of the First Committee in this and future sessions. I would therefore be willing to assist in any way to explore alternative ways to enable us to make progress today, including the possibility of partially adopting the agenda to exclude the agenda item in item 12 until such a time as this matter is sorted out, as well as the possibility of referring the matter back to the General Assembly to determine whether it merits further consideration in the plenary.

I regret that my intervention may perhaps not have been along the lines of facilitating our work in the manner that the Chairman expected. But I really find that there is no alternative to raising the issue before us, as it is a very serious substantive issue.

**Mr. Rowe** (Sierra Leone): Let me also congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections.

I think the Chairman earlier mentioned the fact that document A/C.1/58/1, "Allocation of agenda items to the First Committee", is a document of the General Assembly. This Committee is a committee of the General Assembly, and I do not think we can go into substantive issues on the agenda. I think that the substantive issues that have been raised by other delegations, which we quite understand, should be considered when we deal with the clustering of items — probably in the thematic discussion — to determine exactly where they should go. But as a matter of procedure, I do not believe that the Committee can even refer this document back to the General Assembly.

I think the Chairman mentioned — and he may wish to emphasize it — the fact that this is a document of the Assembly. We cannot change it or send it back. Let us deal with the specific issues that have been raised when we cluster items. We look forward to the Chairman's own suggestion regarding clustering. I recall that at the Committee's informal meeting I mentioned the allocation of the number of meetings devoted. We adjusted to the Chairman's proposal that we could be a little more flexible in order to concentrate further on substantive issues during the second part of our programme of work.

I would therefore suggest that we proceed to the consideration and adoption of the proposed programme of work and timetable and postpone any further discussion on the details of the agenda item.

**Mr. Najafi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Indeed, the main concern is non-transparency on this specific issue, which has been worked out by I do not know whom. The letter from the President of the General Assembly in document A/C.1/58/1 refers to document A/58/250, which is the report of the General Committee. The section listing the agenda items does not include the bracketed portion in item 12 of the annex to document A/C.1/58/1. The bracketed part comes from paragraph 55 of the report of the General Committee and contains the Committee's recommendation.

My expert in the General Committee thought at the time that it was just a recommendation to somehow bring the issue to the attention of the First Committee — but not to place the issue at the same level as other agenda items. That is the problem we face today. We hope that we will be able to overcome this problem during our proceedings, because it is a very important and substantive issue, and not merely a procedural one.

**The Chairman**: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I would simply like to refer, as the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran has done, to paragraph 55 of document A/58/250, which concerns agenda item 73. The General Committee indeed decided to recommend that some portions of the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency that deal with the subject matter of agenda item 73 be drawn to the attention to the attention of the First Committee in connection with its consideration of that item. At its 2nd plenary meeting, the General Assembly acted upon that recommendation and allocated those portions to the First Committee. That recommendation can be found in the list of items allocated to the First Committee in the annex to document A/C.1/58/1.

As the Ambassador of Sierra Leone has pointed out, this is a decision adopted by the General Assembly. Notwithstanding the fact that this ultimately pertains to substance, the business at hand today is the adoption of our proposed programme of work and timetable. I also very much agreed with the representative of Pakistan when he pointed out that there are several issues of overlap in the work of the First Committee as well as in the agenda of the General Assembly as a whole. Hopefully, the Assembly will, over time and with the support of all delegations, be able to make the agenda more transparent and contain less overlap. After the adoption of our programme of work and timetable, I will make a few remarks with regard to the working methods and agenda of the First Committee. That is something to which I hope to devote some time during this session.

**Mr. Suseanu** (Romania): As the Chairman has rightly pointed out, the report of the IAEA (A/58/312) will be presented as a whole for debate in the General Assembly. There are of course parts of the report that are relevant to the work of the First Committee — for example, the issue of placing weapons-grade nuclear materials under the control of the IAEA on a voluntary basis as a result of the implementation of bilateral nuclear disarmament arrangements or measures. There are also other parts of the report that are not relevant to our work — for instance, those relating to technical

cooperation, waste management, nuclear security and so on.

I propose that we approve the programme of work and retain the bracketed portion as contained in the text.

**Mr. Issa** (Egypt): I will not take up much more of the Committee's time. I have just two very specific comments to make related to my earlier intervention.

First, I recall that 10 or 11 years ago, in 1992 or 1993, a similar incident occurred in the Third Committee, with which I was working at the time. I would have to go back to look into the specific details of how it was resolved, but the General Assembly did reconsider its decision. Therefore, with regard to the General Assembly not being able to reconsider its decision, the rules of procedure do, I think, permit it. I recall a precedent from 10 or 11 years ago. I therefore think that it may be advisable for the Chairman to ask the Secretary of the Committee to inform us as to what the rules of procedure permit and do not permit with regard to what subsidiary committees can do with issues referred to them by the plenary.

Secondly, I take note of the comments by our colleague from Romania, but I also think that, as several delegations have pointed out, this is a very serious substantive issue. The bracketed text in item 12 of the annex to document A/C.1/58/1 reads as follows:

> "The General Assembly decided that some portions of the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (A/58/312), which deal with the subject matter of item 73, would be drawn to the attention of the First Committee in connection with its consideration of item 73."

If I were to interpret it legally, I would say that the phrase "would be drawn to the attention of the First Committee" implies that it would not be up to the First Committee to decide which items are relevant; rather, it would be up to the plenary of the Assembly to draw them to our attention.

Moreover, in connection with the consideration of agenda item 73, our consideration of it and all other items will start on the first day of our substantive work, on 6 October, when we begin the general debate. It would therefore seem to me that we need to have a clear idea before 6 October about which parts of the report are relevant and are going to be drawn to our attention.

I think there is really more to this matter than meets the eye from a very quick look at the text of that item 12. This is a serious issue. Our colleague from Romania has drawn our attention to some aspects of the work of the IAEA that may or may not be relevant, but there are other aspects of the Agency's work during the past year, some of which are highly politicized and some of which are being considered either by the Security Council or the IAEA's Board of Governors. I think one has to look at the whole issue with circumspection.

I would really like to caution against a very hurried approach to adoption. If possible, I would like to ask the secretariat — through you Mr. Chairman, although I do not want to take up too much of your time — to direct us as to what the rules of procedure permit and what they do not permit, so that we can resolve this issue.

**The Chairman**: Before giving the floor to the Secretary of the Committee, I would like simply to reiterate that this has been formally adopted by the General Assembly and it is therefore not for us to readopt it in the Committee. We are dealing with our draft programme of work for this session — the running of the general debate, the submission of draft resolutions and the duration of the thematic discussion, as well as the number of meetings devoted to action on all draft resolutions, among other issues.

I recognize that this is a matter of substantive importance for a number of delegations. But I would like to remind the Committee once again that the General Assembly has formally adopted the agenda for its fifty-eighth session and at that point also acted with regard to the allocation of various agenda items to all six Main Committees, as well as of those items to be considered directly in plenary meeting.

I give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

**Mr. Durrani** (Pakistan): I apologize for taking the floor once again. As far as procedure is concerned, a report is the consequence of a resolution or a decision, not the other way around. One does not first present a report and then follow with a decision. I repeat: a report is the consequence of a decision or a resolution on a particular agenda item.

I raised a procedural question because I have to report to my capital that item 12 of the annex to document A/C.1/58/1 contains a bracketed portion that

refers to a report, but which does not support a resolution. I am therefore putting a procedural question to the secretariat.

As regards your observation, Mr. Chairman, that this has been adopted by the General Assembly, oversights sometimes take place. We will consider this to be an oversight; there is always room to rectify such oversights by referring the issue back to the General Assembly. The First Committee can do that if there is confusion or a tie on a particular issue. The reason for my procedural question is that a resolution can request a report, but a report cannot request a resolution.

Here, we are given to understand that there is a report. But where is the resolution? The resolution lies in agenda item 14, which refers to the IAEA report. That is the proper forum and agenda item. So this is a procedural question. I have no problem with the content of the report. But I have to convince the experts in my capital — and I am sure that representatives of other Member States will have to do likewise — regarding placement of this particular statement in a particular agenda item or a particular resolution. This is a question not of substance but of procedure, because it could cause so much confusion.

We have talked about sub-item (w) of agenda item 73. Again, sub-item (w) does not refer to that in a substantive manner. It is referred to only in the preambular part — which also refers to no threat or use of force. So we should bring in the Charter; then we would be discussing the Charter. The Millennium Development Goals also talk about peace and security — so we should bring in all of those. But that is the result of a particular decision. Here, I am talking about a particular decision — where is it? That particular decision has to follow from a resolution. No resolution is referred to in the bracketed portion — it would find no place there.

So in order to ensure further clarity, therefore, this question must to be referred back, first to the legal Committee, and secondly to the General Assembly. And that the First Committee can recommend.

**The Chairman**: Having conferred with the Secretary of the Committee, I would like to note the following. Issues have been raised here this morning which are complex in nature and will therefore need to be drawn to the attention of the Legal Counsel of the Secretariat as regards the rules of procedure and their interpretation. To be honest, this is a very delicate and profound issue in terms of procedure — although of course substance lies behind it. But due to its delicate and complex nature, we need to consult with the Office of Legal Affairs as regards a possible re-referral of the issue to the General Assembly as a whole

Secondly, I would simply like to note that, when the Committee deals with agenda item 73 — general and complete disarmament — it will be for the Member States, in the course of our general debate and, subsequently, during the other phases of our work, to deal in an appropriate manner with those portions of the IAEA report that deal with general and complete disarmament. Unfortunately, at this stage I am unable to pinpoint exactly which portions would refer to item 73, general and complete disarmament. The title of the agenda item is all-encompassing, and therefore it is difficult to pinpoint exactly which portions of the IAEA's annual report, as contained in document A/58/312, would be candidates for such consideration. Ultimately, the Member States would have to use their judgement in this regard.

I hope that, for the time being, my comments will satisfy those delegations that have expressed concerns. This matter will have to be revisited.

Can I take it that we can now proceed to the adoption of our draft programme of work and timetable?

**Mr. Najafi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Is it the understanding of the Committee — and not a decision — that under this agenda item, as you mentioned, Sir, any delegation can draw the attention of the Committee to any portion of the report? Here, the language is very vague. It says that some portions would be drawn to the attention of the First Committee. It is not clear who is going to draw the attention of the First Committee to some portions.

If that is the understanding, we can go along with your proceeding, Sir.

**The Chairman**: I am not the arbiter of the General Assembly's rules of procedure. I am merely the Chairman of the First Committee, but if we try to look into this issue simply on the basis of the documentation that we have, we note the item allocated to the First Committee, entitled "General and complete disarmament". That is my first point.

Secondly, we have a decision by the General Assembly that some portions of the annual report of the

IAEA dealing with this particular agenda item "would be drawn to the attention of the First Committee". That is my second point.

My third point, and conclusion, is that it is the Member States to whose attention these relevant portions have been drawn. As we are dealing with the agenda item on general and complete disarmament, it is ultimately up to the Member States to use their best judgement as to which portions of IAEA's annual report would fall under the roof of agenda item 73.

As I said, I am not an arbiter of any gravity on this issue and I stand to be corrected, but in simply trying to use my best judgement on the basis of the documents and decisions that we have, that is the conclusion that I would be tempted to draw. If this satisfies the Committee, I would now proceed to the adoption of our draft programme of work and timetable.

May I take it that the proposed draft programme of work and timetable, as contained in document A/C.1/58/CRP.1/Rev.1, meets the approval of the Committee?

*It was so decided.*

**The Chairman**: As I mentioned during our informal organizational meeting on 18 September, it is my intention, in addition to what has been indicated in the formal programme of work and timetable, to convene informal consultations of the Committee on the issue of working methods and agenda. These consultations will be held after the conclusion of the general debate and before the start of the thematic discussion, most likely towards the end of the second week of the session. Full interpretation will be provided and I hope that we will be able to meet in one of the slightly smaller conference rooms so as to facilitate an interactive discussion.

Let me stress that the informal consultations will be convened for the sole purpose of exploring whether or not the membership would be able to find common ground to make our work more effective and more relevant. Both the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General have called for the strengthening of multilateral institutions, in particular the General Assembly. Furthermore, the General Assembly itself has repeatedly resolved to improve its working methods, including those of its Main Committees. Effective and serious multilateralism is possible only if the multilateral mechanisms themselves provide a focused and credible alternative to unilateral or plurilateral solutions.

As I promised on 18 September, the Bureau will provide the Committee with a list of suggested issues for discussion in advance of the informal consultations. This is so as to have a structured and focused discussion. However, rather than try to present the Committee with a pre-cooked menu of solutions, the Bureau will provide questions and some food for thought. It will then be up to the membership to present its views on the issues concerned. After that, we will, hopefully, have a fuller picture as to what might command the Member States' support in terms of revitalizing our work. At that point, the Bureau would naturally stand ready to facilitate any further agreement.

What kinds of issues should we, then, discuss in our informal consultations — or rather, what issues could we discuss in our informal consultations? Without prejudice to the list to be provided by the Bureau, the issues could include, among other things, the following:

First, could we manage the Committee's time more efficiently? In particular, should the Committee have a more intensive and condensed general debate by having the First and Fourth Committees meet sequentially, at least in the early part of the session? Also, how could we run a smoother thematic discussion, with a seamless presentation of draft resolutions, during the time that the Committee has at its disposal?

Secondly, could we introduce new formats for discussion in the Committee? Specifically, could the general debate be re-engineered so as to make it more interactive, or could the thematic part perhaps include the organization of open-ended panels for discussion on some important agenda items?

Thirdly, how could we respond to the oft-repeated calls by the General Assembly for the clustering, biennialization and triennialization of its agenda item? Are there agenda items that could be retired or merged under other, current items? Moreover, should some agenda items of the First Committee continue, to a large extent, to correspond to individual resolution titles? Would it, in the end, be possible to develop an agenda with fewer but broader items that could

accommodate several or many substantively interlinked resolutions under each item?

Fourthly, would there be scope for clustering resolutions, where feasible? Omnibus resolutions would clearly not be an option for texts where deeply rooted national positions conflict, but on some issues there might be potential for such a move.

Fifthly, how could the First Committee best abide by the General Assembly's call to limit the all-too-prolific requests for reports? How could the Committee facilitate requests for and the provision of integrated and synthetic reports by the Secretariat?

Sixthly, would there be scope for fine-tuning the agenda of the Committee in terms of dispatching some items to other Main Committees or the plenary of the General Assembly? Are there, correspondingly, items in the plenary or other Main Committees whose logical venue would be the First Committee? For example — and this is simply food for thought — would the question of Antarctica be better placed in the Second Committee or in the Sixth Committee? That is a hypothetical question.

These are, more or less, items which could be discussed in the informals to be convened.

I should now like to draw the Committee's attention to the relevant rules and recommendations of the General Assembly affecting the work of the Main Committees, including those contained in decision 34/401, in particular the provisions dealing with explanations of vote, rights of reply and budgetary and financial questions, which I intend to apply with the cooperation and assistance of all members of the Committee, which I shall need.

In order to make full use of the time and facilities available to the Committee, I intend — again, with the cooperation and support of members — to open the meetings of the Committee promptly at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., and I shall endeavour to close meetings at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. sharp, respectively.

In that regard, I appeal to all speakers, especially to the first three speakers at a given meeting, to kindly be present in the Conference Room on time. I also urge all other members of the Committee to kindly attend the meetings of the Committee on time, in person or to have a representative of their delegations present. I wish to emphasize the importance of punctuality in the interest of ensuring an effective and orderly organization of our work and achieving economy for the Organization. I trust that delegations will strictly observe punctuality. I might add that punctuality really is not an end in itself; it is a means of expressing courtesy towards one another.

At the same time, I wish to point out that it is my intention to convene meetings of the Committee when a sufficient number of speakers are inscribed on the list of speakers. As a general rule, we should have no fewer than eight speakers inscribed on the list for any given meeting, so that we can utilize the time and resources available to us in the most effective manner possible and obviate the need to adjourn our meetings early for lack of speakers.

The resources allocated to a meeting that is cancelled at an appropriate time may be released for other meetings held within or outside the framework of the First Committee. In that connection — and this might sound somewhat technical to members, but I want to make the point — I should like to inform the Committee that, during the main part of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the First Committee utilized 74 per cent of its allocated conference resources and lost 26 hours and 20 minutes owing to late starting and early adjournment of meetings.

As one can see, the First Committee's utilization factor of conference resources has been below the benchmark of 80 per cent. In that regard, I sincerely hope that all delegations will make a special effort in order to enable the Chair to begin meetings on time and to improve the record of utilization of the conference facilities available to the Committee. I might add that my attention was drawn to that fact by the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences.

I should also like to draw the Committee's attention to agenda item 20, entitled "Election of the officers of the Main Committees", in particular rule 99, paragraph (a), of the rules of procedure, which, as amended by Assembly resolution 56/509 of 8 July 2002, reads as follows:

> "All the Main Committees shall, at least three months before the opening of the session, elect a Chairman. Elections of the other officers provided for in rule 103 shall be held at the latest by the end of the first week of the session."

In view of the foregoing, I should like to propose that the First Committee, in accordance with that resolution, consider this item in June 2004, some three months before the opening of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to proceed accordingly.

*It was so decided.*

**The Chairman**: Regarding the submission of draft resolutions, I wish to draw the Committee's attention to paragraph 24 of document A/58/250, dated 17 September 2003, entitled "Organization of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items". The paragraph reads as follows:

> "The General Committee took note and decided to bring to the attention of the General Assembly that the Secretary-General encourages Member States to transmit all draft resolutions and decisions in electronic form as well as on paper and that the submitters are responsible for ensuring that the electronic and paper versions of the draft resolutions and decisions are identical in content."

In that connection, I urge those Member States wishing to submit draft resolutions or decisions to the Committee to kindly observe the following procedure. For submission of draft resolutions that are based on pre-existing resolutions, the officially issued version — for example, the A/RES document issued on the Official Document System (ODS) — must be used as the base text, with all new text and changes to the old text indicated clearly in boldface. Similarly, for revised draft resolutions, the original draft resolution issued on the ODS must be used as the base text, with all revisions indicated clearly in boldface.

Members are requested to follow the procedures and to submit both the hard copy of the final text and a diskette to the secretariat for processing of the document. Those delegations wishing to table a draft resolution or decision are encouraged to contact the secretariat of the Committee for further information and assistance. The secretariat of the Committee will provide pre-existing resolutions for members, and they have expressed their readiness to assist delegations in that respect.

Finally, I should like to appeal to all delegations to switch off their cellular telephones during the proceedings of the Committee; I turned mine off belatedly in the course of this morning's session. I hope that that, too, will meet with the Committee's understanding and full cooperation.

At this stage, I wish to give the floor to the Secretary of the First Committee to inform the Committee of certain matters pertaining to the proceedings of the Committee.

**Mr. Sattar** (Secretary of the Committee): I should like to bring to the attention of delegations the following points, which are directly related to the organization of the work of the Committee.

As members may recall, the General Assembly, at its fifty-eighth session, has once again decided to depart from the rule that one quarter of members must be present before a meeting of a Main Committee may be declared open and a debate permitted to proceed.

The Assembly made that recommendation on the understanding that such a departure from the rules did not involve any permanent change in the relevant provision of rule 67[108] of the rules of procedure, pertaining to the quorum for the opening of meetings, whereby the majority of members must be present for any decision to be taken.

As indicated in the programme of work and timetable, the list of speakers for the general debate on disarmament and related international security agenda items will be closed at 6 p.m. on Monday, 6 October. A number of delegations have already indicated their intention to participate in the debate, and the secretariat has taken note of those requests. Delegations wishing to participate in the general debate are asked to inscribe their names on the list of speakers at their earliest convenience.

As the Chairman noted in his statements, members of the Committee are requested to submit draft resolutions and decisions, particularly draft resolutions that entail programme budget implications, as far in advance as possible, in order to allow sufficient time for the preparation by the secretariat of an estimate of expenditures and for its consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly.

In that regard, I would like to request members of the Committee to note that draft resolutions, amendments and names of sponsors thereof should be submitted to the secretariat of the Committee electronically, on a diskette, accompanied by a hard copy of the text to ensure accuracy and to avoid any possible misunderstandings, as well as for the timely circulation of the text in all official languages. I would like to indicate that 48 hours are required for the secretariat, in order to process the document.

In that connection, I request those delegations wishing to submit draft resolutions or decisions to kindly consult with the secretariat on this matter. I wish to assure members of the Committee that the secretariat, as mentioned by the Chairman, is ready to provide to delegations the pre-existing text of resolutions — the officially issued version — and will extend its full cooperation and assistance in order to facilitate their work in that respect.

Request for the use of conference rooms for group meetings should also be submitted in writing as early as possible so that the necessary arrangements made be made in time.

I would like to inform members that document A/C.1/58/INF.1, which for the purpose of information and ready reference will list all documents of the First Committee, will be made available to the Committee on Monday, 6 October. That document will be updated as appropriate. I would also like to inform members that document A/C.1/58/3, containing lists of the membership of the Committee, will also be circulated on 6 October. In that connection, delegations are requested to submit their list of members to the secretariat as soon as possible.

Delegations are further requested to provide the conference officers with a minimum of 30 copies of all prepared statements for conference-servicing purposes. It should be noted that these copies are in addition to the 300 copies required for any necessary general distribution among delegations, specialized agencies and observers.

I would like once again to give the Chairman and other officers of the Committee and all delegations the firm assurance of the support and cooperation of the secretariat of the First Committee and, of course, of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

**The Chairman**: If no delegation wishes to make any comments or remarks at this stage, I propose to adjourn the meeting. As decided, the Committee will begin its substantive work on Monday, 6 October, in Conference Room 4.

**Mr. Issa** (Egypt): I wish to assure you, Mr. Chairman, of Egypt's cooperation and support during the work of the First Committee. We regret that the discussion, whose gravity you appreciated, did not seem to have facilitated our work today. However, we certainly appreciate your indulgence and the course that you have taken. We wish to assure you of our appreciation of your work and our continued support for and cooperation with you in the work of the First Committee during this session.

**The Chairman**: Unless I see any other requests to speak, I will adjourn the meeting. As indicated, we will meet a week from today, at 10 a.m. sharp.

*The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.*